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Home Missions Council of North America

Pamphlet

The Story of Metlakahtla

BY

MRS. FREDERICK C. SCHMIDT

BIRDSEYE VIEW OF METLAKAHTLA, ALASKA

THE METLAKAHTLA CHRISTIAN CHURCH
METLAKAHTLA, ALASKA

MINISTER
REV. FREDERICK C. SCHMIDT
METLAKAHTLA, ALASKA

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WILLIAM DUNCAN

1832 - 1918

"THE APOSTLE OF ALASKA"
FOUNDER, ORGANIZER AND LEADER OF
METLAKAHTLA, 1857-1918

INTRODUCTION

BY DR. B. L. MYERS

A PERSONAL FRIEND OF WILLIAM DUNCAN FOR ELEVEN YEARS FROM 1907 TO 1918

This brief "Story of Metlakahtla" is but a supplement to previous books and articles regarding the Mission. For fuller accounts of William Duncan's achievements, the reader is referred to publications such as, "The Apostle of Alaska," by John W. Archtander, L.L.D., "The Story of Metlakahtla," by Sir Henry Wellcome, and the Congressional Record* which present a wealth of facts and details, impossible in Mrs. Schmidt's brief statement.

Mrs. Frederick C. Schmidt has aspired only to set forth a brief review of certain information which will enable visitors to Metlakahtla to take away a few facts, which it is believed, will be of interest to them.

I met William Duncan first in 1907. I conversed with him many times thereafter in the eleven years which followed, before his death. For thirty-seven years I have followed closely, matters concerning Metlakahtla. Mrs. Schmidt's "Story of Metlakahtla" is well presented and timely. It should be widely read.

*74th Congress, Second Session. Part 35 (1939).

REV. AND MRS. FREDERICK C. SCHMIDT AND SON WARREN

Rev. and Mrs. Frederick C. Schmidt began their work in the Metlakahtla Christian Mission, April 3, 1938. They were then well experienced in ministerial work. They had attracted

attention because of their achievements in pastoral leadership at Warroad, Minnesota.

Mr. Schmidt is a graduate of Hamline University, a Veteran of World War I, a tireless worker, a good mixer, and a courageous champion of right, in civic and social, as well as religious life.

Mrs. Schmidt is a graduate of Macalester College, where she majored in English. As a missionary's wife, she has been an unusual asset to the community life. She speaks well in missionary conferences, and writes helpfully regarding her experiences with people with whom she works.

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Both the officers and enlisted men were eager to hear the history of Metlakahtla, and, like the tourists of pre-war days, expressed a desire for an illustrated souvenir pamphlet of this most unique of Missions. This story is the attempt to meet that request.

The 700 Indians who live in Metlakahtla are mostly Tsimsheans, originally members of a very savage tribe found along the west coast of British Columbia. In 1857 the Church of England sent a young missionary to civilize and Christianize this heathen group. The name of this man is one of the brightest in the history of missions—William Duncan. He was born near Beverley, England, and was well launched on a lucrative business career at the time he first heard the call of the Northwest Mission Field. Like another great missionary, he said, "This one thing I do"—and nothing ever swerved him from the task to which he had dedicated his life.

His first work was to learn the Tsimshean language. His keen mind and tireless energy enabled him to make rapid progress, and after he had mastered their tongue, the natives said he could put more meaning into it than they themselves could. As soon as he was prepared, he began to preach the Word of God to the Tsimsheans in their own language. Converts were made, and in 1862, Mr. Duncan persuaded these faithful ones to move with him from Port Simpson to what became Old Metlakahtla, near Prince Rupert, B. C., in order that he might foster their new way of life, uninterrupted by the wiles of those still untouched by the Gospel.

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The administration of the Christian Mission, and of the Trust Fund willed to it by Mr. Duncan, was placed in the hands of three Co-Trustees. This arrangement still holds. At

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In addition to paying the ordinary expenses of Metlakahtla Christian Mission, the Trustees have expended something over $50,000.00 in rehabilitation and enlargement of the Mission properties at Metlakahtla. They have been able to do this and at the same time maintain a substantial amount in invested funds, only the income of which is used for benevolence and Mission expenses.

For years after Mr. Duncan's death, Mrs. Mathilda Minthorn, a Friends' Minister, and widow of Dr. Minthorn, who had worked as a physician with Mr. Duncan, carried on loyally. The people trusted her and loved her. The Elders of Mr. Duncan's Church have always been able men. With Mrs. Minthorn's assistance they kept the Mission functioning until 1932, when Mr. Robert Tomlinson, who spoke the Tsimshean language fluently, came to take charge of the work. He and his family labored unselfishly in this vineyard of the Lord for five years. Then the present pastor, the Reverend Frederick C. Schmidt, a Congregational minister from Minnesota, was called to this field.

In 1920 soon after Mr. Duncan's death, a Presbyterian Church was organized in Metlakahtla thus dividing the religious work of the community, which then had a population of between 500 and 600 native Indians. The sponsors of the Christian church have continuously sought a solution of the unfortunate division of the community but to date have not been able to establish wholehearted cooperation. The Trustees are not very hopeful of beneficial results in the near future and therefore are centering their efforts upon the full development of an efficient program as provided under the terms of the William Duncan Trust.

In the first years of Mr. Schmidt's pastorate, some extensive building and repairing of Mission property was done. A modern manse was

constructed and furnished. The church itself was put on a cement foundation, shingled, repainted, equipped with new doors and windows, all without changing the structural appearance of the exterior. The interior was entirely redecorated. The walls of the auditorium are made of polished alternating vertical boards of red and yellow cedar. Again all the labor was done by the natives themselves. One man said, "My father helped build this church. I have helped to rebuild it, and my children will enjoy it for many years before any more work will have to be put on it. It is very good, now."

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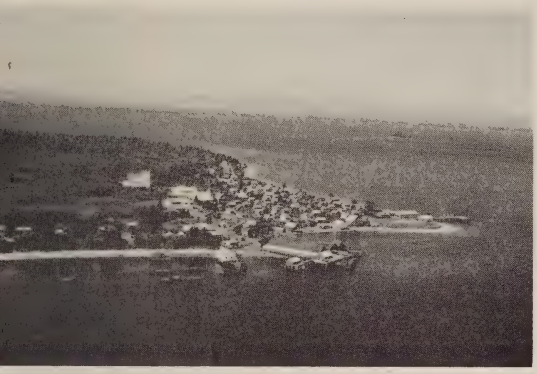
Mr. Duncan's old home has been preserved as he lived in it, a Museum of interest to all who visit the village, and a shrine to those who knew and loved him best.

Great victories do not come easily. Mr. Duncan and his faithful pioneers labored and suffered and endured persecution that Christianity might find its way into the hearts and lives of their people. Such love and sacrifice is never in vain. Truly the Tsimshean heritage is a glorious one, as it is embodied in the gleaming white towers of the Duncan Memorial Church, the Westminster of Alaska.

WILLIAM DUNCAN ON ERRAND OF MERCY

DR. MINTHORN SAID MR. DUNCAN WENT DAILY TO SEE THE SICK AND NEEDY

The Story of Metlakatla



BIRDSEYE VIEW OF METLAKATLA, ALASKA

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(METHODIST AFFILIATION)

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THE EXETER, SEATTLE, WASH.

(SECOND PRINTING)
1945

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Dr. E. Stanley Jones, noted missionary of India, recently completed a tour of Alaska. When he looked back on his visitation to many Alaska communities, he said: "My visit to Metlakatla was a deep joy to me. It is the brightest spot in Alaska, and shows what can be done where there is a spiritual basis for a civilization, and where liquor is kept out. It is a story by itself and one that needs to be told."

This brief "Story of Metlakatla" by Emma Joy Schmidt, is a very limited and modest effort to help tourists and visitors to Metlakatla to understand this unusual Indian missionary community. For fuller accounts of William Duncan's achievements, the reader is referred to publications such as "Metlakatla, a True Narrative of the Red Man," by George T. B. Davis, "The Apostle of Alaska," by John W. Archtander, LL.D., "The Story of Metlakatla," by Sir Henry Wellcome, and the Congressional Record* which present a wealth of facts and

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MATILDA ATKINSON MINTHORN

Dr. H. J. Minthorn was physician to the Mission for many years. When William Duncan died in 1918, he and his wife continued the religious work of the Mission. Mrs. Minthorn was a fully accredited minister of the Friends Church. She was an earnest Bible student, deeply spiritual, and an impressive speaker. She devotedly served the congregation, even after her husband's death (1922), till Mr. Tomlinson took up the work.

Dr. Robert Tomlinson of Ireland was associated with William Duncan beginning about 1867. He spoke Indian languages and was a Doctor of Medicine and an ordained minister. His son, Robert, grew up at Old Metlakatla in British Columbia and also learned the Indian language.

About 1933, 15 years after William Duncan's death, the younger Tomlinson was engaged by the Trustees and came to Metlakatla, Alaska. He served for five years as head of the Mission. He rendered faithful and satisfactory service but he was not an Ordained Minister and was succeeded in 1938 by the present pastor, Rev. Frederick C. Schmidt.

In the first years of Mr. Schmidt's pastorate, some extensive building and repairing of Mission property was done. A modern manse was constructed and furnished. The church itself was put on a cement foundation, shingled, repainted, equipped with new doors and win-

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—Emma Joy Schmidt.

AFFILIATION WITH METHODISM

December 6, 1944, marked another milestone in the progress of our Metlakatla Christian Mission, adding a new chapter to this "Story of Metlakatla." An official affiliation (not merger) with The Methodist Church was consummated, which not only preserves the identity and independence of this historic Christian Mission, but assures to it the advan-

tages of supervision by the largest evangelical organization in the world, with a membership of approximately 8,000,000, plus official representation in such significant interdenominational bodies as the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, and the Home Missions Council of North America.

The procedure that resulted in the achievement of this objective:

At a July 25, 1944, meeting of the Methodist Board of Missions in Chicago, its Division of Home Missions was informed that the

BISHOP BRUCE R. BAXTER
METHODIST BISHOP OF ALASKA

Cotrustees of the William Duncan Trust, who sponsor the Metlakatla Christian Mission on Annette Island, Alaska, were considering the advisability of affiliation with one of America's outstanding evangelical denominations.

Said Division authorized an invitation, which was favorably considered by the Cotrustees, to effect an affiliation with The Methodist Church. At a September 20, 1944, Executive Committee meeting of the Division in New York city, action was taken, naming three representatives —Bishop Bruce R. Baxter, Dr. William J. Elliott and Judge T. M. McDonald — who, with three representatives of the William Duncan Trust—Dr. B. L. Myers, Dr. E. D. Kohlstedt and Mr. F. A. Wright—were constituted a Joint Committee of Six to consider and prepare a mutually acceptable plan.

This Joint Committee of Six met in Chicago on September 24, 1944, organized by electing E. D. Kohlstedt, Chairman, and W. J. Elliott, Secretary, then spent the day discussing basic factors to such an affiliation. Reaching a common mind relative to conditions and procedure, they agreed: first, that Judge T. M. McDonald examine the late William Duncan's Will and Mandate, relative to any legal impediment; second, in case of no obstacle, that he prepare a Plan of Affiliation, incorporating the accepted items; third, that said Plan be submitted to

SUPT. KNIGHT, BISHOP BAXTER, DR. KOHLSTEDT
(LEFT TO RIGHT)
AT GRAVE OF WILLIAM DUNCAN BESIDE THE CHURCH

the Officiary and Congregation of the Metlakatla Christian Mission for initial consideration and modification.

In order to assure every essential precaution, Cotrustees F. A. Wright and E. D. Kohlstedt made a 10-day visit to Metlakatla in November, when the proposed Plan of Affiliation with The Methodist Church received deliberative consideration at three officially called meetings of the Board of Elders, and a subsequent joint session of the Church Elders and Congregation; also, at a later meeting of several Elders, temporarily in Seattle.

After free discussions of the Plan of Affiliation, with copies of the document in their hands, secret written ballots revealed only one negative vote, which was immediately made affirmative. Hence, the Committee of Six and both Church Elders and Congregation voted unanimously for the Plan of Affiliation, which was presented to and unanimously adopted by the Division of Home Missions at the Annual Meeting of the Methodist Board of Missions in Buck Hill Falls, Pennsylvania, on December 6, 1944. An interchange of official representatives

INTERIOR OF CHURCH

was also authorized: Bishop Bruce R. Baxter for the Methodist Board of Missions; and Dr. B. L. Myers for the Cotrustees, with privileges of the floor on all matters affecting said affiliation which, if not satisfactory after a four-year trial period, can be terminated by either party after due notice.

CONFERENCE AT METLAKATLA
ALL ALASKA METHODIST MISSION

May 5-8, 1945, the Alaska Methodist Mission had a very worthwhile meeting in Metlakatla.

With the exception of Unga and Unalaska, stations temporarily unsupplied, missionaries and lay delegates came from Anchorage, Hope, Juneau, Ketchikan, Nome, Seldovia, and Seward. In addition, there were a number of visitors from nearby places, plus these officials: Bishop and Mrs. Bruce R. Baxter, Portland, Oregon; Alaska Mission Superintendent

DELEGATES TO THE METHODIST MISSIONS CONFERENCE (MAY 1945)

G. Edward Knight, Seward; Home Missions Secretary, C. W. Lokey, as well as Madams M. C. Reynolds and Robert Stewart, representing the Woman's Division of Christian Service, New York city. Also E. D. Kohlstedt, chairman of the cotrustees.

Most of this personnel, visiting Annette Island for the first time, were thoroughly thrilled by what they saw in Metlakatla; an amazingly advanced Indian Community, with its comfortable cottage homes, local self-government, impressive public buildings, electric lighting system, and water works; and, especially our cathedral-like Duncan Memorial Church, with its effectively functioning officiary and congregation, under the constructive leadership of Rev. and Mrs. Fred C. Schmidt, serving their seventh year of a fruitful ministry.

As hosts of the mission conference, the Schmidts, with the wholehearted cooperation of our Metlakatla church and community, measured up to the highest expectations; all attendants were comfortably housed and fed; the three evening dinners, prepared and served by the women of our Duncan Memorial Church, would have done credit to any similar church group in the United States.

CONCLUSIONS

It is impossible to understand the quality of Metlakatla, or the cause of her growth, stability, and unusual impressiveness, unless one knows something of what was built into the community life from the beginning. William Duncan was not only a missionary. He was an educator, financier, a statesman, and an inspirational leader. He well knew that to make underprivileged Indians good citizens, and good Christians, which he set out to do from the beginning, he must build upon fundamental principals of citizenship and Christian character. That he did.

To amplify, at least four essentials of good community life, on which Metlakatla was founded and developed, should be remembered as the woof and warp of everything that was woven into every essential program of life, whether the individual or the group was concerned. These four fundamentals were as follows:

(1) The religious life of the community came first. It centered in the beautiful and spacious church, which still stands, the conspicuous structure of the whole community. In the sanctuary devotional services, lead by "Father Duncan," as the people reverently called him, and Sunday School, conducted by the people, were held every Sunday. Just before his death,

one of his faithful followers said that William Duncan "had not failed to preach at Sunday services in 60 years, if he was in Metlakatla—and he was seldom away." His people who were employed away from Metlakatla at times, often returned to have part in the Sabbath programs. All community and industrial activities were discontinued during Sunday. Even in the rush of the fishing season, the cannery did not operate, as most canneries in Alaska do. If a tourist boat entered port on Sunday, it was asked to depart before the hour of church services. Metlakatla, under the leadership of William Duncan, knew and observed the forms and spirit of religious life.

(2) Next to the religious programs of life, education was fundamental in the foundation work of civilization set up for Metlakatla. William Duncan started a school almost as soon as he began to preach. Metlakatla had two schools, one for boys and one for girls.

William Duncan was a competent teacher. Dr. Robert Tomlinson, who was the Mission physician for some years, and who, it is said, was educated both as a minister and a physician, once said that Dr. Duncan was an extraordinary teacher. So also have Metlakatlans who went to school to him. It is a well-known fact that missionaries, and teachers—many of them college graduates—often visited Metlakatla to study the technique of the community programs.

Looking backward, some have criticized William Duncan for his lack of interest in higher education. He fitted his technique to the needs of his Indian people. He taught from a practical point of view, and to practical ends. He was not as much interested in higher education as he was in preparing his people to meet the issues and requirements of life. Many observers have said that in this he showed a depth of educational understanding to an unusual degree, and laid a foundation for fruitage, which has become extraordinary in the lives of his people.

William Duncan's educational equipment was in advance of his day. He believed in and practiced visual education. He had a projector and lantern slides to illustrate his teachings. Some of those slides can be produced today. He had an Ediphone talking machine, and thereby had important matters discussed by authorities, for his people. A member of the Ediphone Company has been endeavoring, during the past two years, to purchase the very instrument which William Duncan used, to place it, as an antique, in a museum of Ediphone Company units on the Pacific Coast. He also placed desirable equipment in the hands

of his pupils, and taught them how to use it. When he died, a number of stringed musical instruments — in good condition, perhaps a dozen, were found in a room. Dr. H. J. Minthorn, then physician of the community, explained that William Duncan furnished them for use by young people of the community, with a single requirement that they care for them and practice faithfully. So also it was with the first band of Metlakatla.

The results of William Duncan's educational system were conspicuous and impressive. Many of his people were skilled tradesmen and craftsmen. It is said that Metlakatla's beautiful original church, and the present spacious town hall had not a nail driven by a white man. During World War I, several of the people worked in the white community of Ketchikan as carpenters, millwrightsmen, and some as captains of sizeable cannery tenders, at wages standard for white men of the trades. One of them stated that he sailed his boat at night by the stars, by the use of information William Duncan taught him by the use of lantern slides, which showed the stars in the Heavens. In this, his teachings antedated the modern planetarium. Some of these lantern slides also are well remembered.

But, William Duncan did not confine his teachings to practical things alone. He taught his pupils cultural subjects, especially music. His band was famous. It was the best in Southeastern Alaska, if not all of Alaska. It perhaps still is. It was often employed by white communities on celebration occasions, as the Fourth of July. It is recalled that once, William Sulzer, then Governor of the State of New York, who was "the orator of the day" at Ketchikan, said in substance, "Before I proceed with the address of this occasion, I wish to say that I think, in all my life I have never heard better band music than these Indian boys from Metlakatla have furnished us today." And the Metlakatla Choral Society; it has been the wonder of many an Alaskan, and music lover. On one occasion, when the writer was present, they sang Handel's "Messiah" to a white audience, which filled the largest church auditorium in Ketchikan.

Anyone who really knew Metlakatla in William Duncan's day, knew that he was the origin, soul and leader of all these refining and cultural organizations and influences until some of his own people, like Benjamin Haldane, became competent to "follow in his train."

This much may be said for William Duncan and his people: Such things do not come by chance. Nor are they the product of incompetency. Rather they are the product of excellent

leadership and effective training. Such cultural expression could not have been the product of inferiority in leadership, or found in pupils who were incapable or untutored. There is not another tribal village in Alaska which shows evidence of higher leadership than William Duncan displayed at Metlakatla; and no primitive people have yielded themselves more susceptibly to the fundamental influences of civilization and Christianity than did the Metlakatlans.

(3) Metlakatla's civilization was built on industry. Early in the establishment of the community, a water-power sawmill was procured and put into operation to cut lumber for home and community purposes. (Now the community has an electrically-powered sawmill.) A salmon cannery was built. It furnished employment and income for the people at home, which in turn segregated the Natives from the social vices which were rampant in that Northland. For the community projects, lumber was obtained from their forests, and salmon from the waters surrounding the island. William Duncan used to say, "The sea is our harvest field." As Charles Schwab, the great steel magnate, once urged, the Metlakatlans "made good with what they had."

Today Metlakatla operates a hydro-electrical plant which furnishes free electricity and water for every home, and for the industries. Many, if not all the homes, have electrical ranges, and radios. The community is prosperous and has no taxes except a small "poll tax." The economic status of Metlakatla, which amazes visitors to the community, is the outgrowth of William Duncan's business acumen.

(4) Metlakatla's civilization was founded on law and order. The people early became familiar with self-government, and obedience to authority, so that today, the Mayor and Councilmen conduct the business of the community with efficiency, dispatch, and dignity. It is a pleasing sight to see them in session and action. These officers are elected by popular vote of the people. They are accountable only to the Interior Department of the Federal Government.

There is a picture of Metlakatla, made in its incipiency, when the village site was yet dotted with stumps, left from the clearing of the forest. In it may be seen the church, the schools, the town hall, and cannery. They are the material temples and centers of religion, education, industry, and law and order, which Dr. E. Stanley Jones, with appreciation and praise, observed (1945) 88 years after William Duncan began his work among the Metlakatlans.

In 1920, shortly after the death of William Duncan, a Presbyterian church was organized at Metlakatla. Only time and high recognition of the principles and values of Christian comity can tell whether 700 Indian people in Alaska, compactly living together, need two churches. If any one is interested in details in this matter, let him study the statement of Dr. Mark A. Matthews, once of Seattle. His opinion is clear-cut and may be had in the Congressional Record* by asking your Senator. He was once Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, was pastor of one of the largest Presbyterian Churches in America, and was an eminent student of church matters.

Further, let it be remembered that the original church at Metlakatla, and the work associated with it, inspired the admiration, esteem and praise of great churchmen, of various denominations, and of great American statesmen. Among such may be named Bishop Phillips Brooks, Dr. Henry Ward Beecher, Dr. Charles A. Brown, Dr. Harlan P. Beach, Dr. Henry Emerson Fosdick, Dr. E. Stanley Jones, Speaker Joseph G. Cannon, Vice President Charles Fairbanks, President Grover Cleveland, President Theodore Roosevelt, President Woodrow Wilson, President Warren G. Harding, Secretary Harold L. Ickes, the Earl of Dufferin, Governor General of Canada, and Sir Henry Wellcome of England. It may be fairly doubted that there is a mission in all of Alaska which has been visited, praised, or befriended by as many notable characters, as has been the good fortune with William Duncan's work and achievement at Metlakatla.

Metlakatla is extraordinary. It has been so ever since it was conceived and put into form. People who hear the story of Metlakatla for the first time, often ask "Who was back of this in its origin to make it possible?" There is only one answer,—"William Duncan."

This little publication is provided to help the public, and visitors to Metlakatla, understand this extraordinary community, which in progressive cooperation, civic organization, educational progress, financial achievement, and religious spirit is Metlakatla. One will travel far to find another place similar to it. Perhaps a place equal to it in the essence of its romance, the form of its expression, and the ends attained in a few short years, will not be found elsewhere under the American flag, if indeed anywhere.

We welcome you to Metlakatla. We hope you find inspiration in this small but extraordi-

*74th Congress, Second Session, Part 35 (1939).

nary village. Metlakatla has had its problems. Some choose to deal chiefly in criticisms, but when life is full of inspiration, why try to hurt or destroy. We prefer the good, therefore we are glad to share this brief, but helpful story with you.

—The Trustees.

WILLIAM DUNCAN ON ERRAND OF MERCY

DR. MINTHORN SAID MR. DUNCAN WENT DAILY TO SEE THE SICK AND NEEDY

PERMANENT EDUCATIONAL FUND

In the development of a program for the cultural enrichment of our Metlakatla Youth, the next step contemplated by the Cotrustees is establishment of a

$20,000—PERMANENT EDUCATIONAL FUND—$20,000

the income from said fund to be used toward furthering educational ambitions of alert Metlakatla boys and girls who merit an opportunity to secure a more adequate cultural equipment than the present Metlakatla Grade School System provides. The Cotrustees of William Duncan Trust will welcome contributions, large or small, toward such a fund from all who may be interested in making a real investment toward the realization of a "more abundant life" in behalf of Metlakatla Christian young people, who desire and deserve this sort of a challenge to equip themselves for places of larger leadership and service in constructive fields of activity.

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PERMANENT FILE

The

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

of

METLAKATLA, ALASKA

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of
METLAKATLA, ALASKA

The story of the Presbyterian Church of Metlakatla, Alaska, is a small part of the romance of an unusual community. To understand it one must know a little of the larger story of the village, which involved sacrificial mission service, clashing personalities, mistakes and failures, but an upward struggle against friends and enemies to a great achievement.

First and last in the story, one is compelled and privileged to pay humble tribute to "Father" William Duncan who conceived a dream and devoted himself completely to the service of developing a Christian community for a group of Tsimpshean Indians. Mr. Duncan was a layman in the Church of England who gave himself to the welfare of Indians in Canada. Prevented from accomplishing his goal there, he moved the colony to Annette Island in the United States territory of Southeastern Alaska. There he established a church, school, cannery, saw mill, and the beginnings of a water system, under his personal direction, for the benefit of the community. He later sought to insure their permanency by establishing a fund from the profit of these enterprises to support them. In the face of rising prosperity he lived simply and tried to guide his people in the same way.

William Duncan built better than he knew. He sowed seeds which would not stay in the pods he made for them. He laid broad, deep foundations but could not prevent a large superstructure on his foundations. He established a school but limited it to four grades, while his people wanted more. He felt it was not good for Indians to have too much money so he paid lower wages than they could get in neighboring places. He provided a water hydrant and sought to control the people by turning off the water. They pleaded for

water and it was turned on by order of the Secretary of the Interior. He established a church, but refused baptism and frowned upon membership in an American denomination. His people wanted both. Receiving their start from their leader, they yearned for greater things than he envisioned for them.

The Government School

The Duncan School usually had four grades. Sometimes the teaching was good, often it was poor. In his later years Mr. Duncan himself tried to teach when no teacher had been secured. After this school had been closed for five years the people petitioned for a government school. The petition was denied lest the government seem to interfere with Mr. Duncan's program. Finally the people themselves prepared a house and fuel, borrowed desks and books for use in the town hall, deposited money in the bank for two months' salary, and asked the government superintendent of education to help them get a teacher. When the desire and purpose were so convincing, Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Department of the Interior, interceded and ordered the Alaska Division of the United States Bureau of Education to assume control of the school property for the community, and to establish a government school. W. G. Beattie of Oregon was then district superintendent of schools for Southeastern Alaska and later was industrial director at Metlakatla for two years under the United States Bureau of Education. Mr. Duncan died in August, 1918, at the age of 84 years. His estate was placed in the hands of a board of trustees who petitioned the government for the return of the school property and control of the school. The petition was denied and the property, built by the efforts of the people, was declared to belong to the community.

The Duncan Church

(The Christian Mission)

The church established and directed by Mr. Duncan was an unincorporated fellowship. He was not ordained. There was no baptism, no

celebration of the Lord's Supper, no recorded membership. It was, however, the church of the community, and representatives of various denominations (Episcopal, Salvation Army, and Presbyterian), having work in that part of Alaska, were accorded the occasional privilege of speaking in it.

Early Presbyterian Beginnings

As EARLY as 1888 children of Metlakatla families were sent to the Presbyterian mission school which was started at Wrangell and then moved to Sitka. Their parents urged them to join the Presbyterian church while in school. Some of the people lived part of the year in other villages and came under the influence of the same church.

Edward Marsden, one of the youths of the village, had been highly favored by Mr. Duncan as a boy, but he lost this favor when he determined to come to the States and get an education, and especially when he decided to study for the Presbyterian ministry. Mr. Marsden returned to Alaska and ministered for a time at Saxman and later moved to Metlakatla. He guided his people in the establishment of the Presbyterian church. He has been unjustly accused of many things but even his enemies must admit that the product of his life is found in the advanced economic, civic, moral, and spiritual life of his people in all of Southeastern Alaska.

People were asking for baptism, communion, church membership, and affiliation with an American denomination. The program of the Christian Mission was under the supervision of the church elders and things were not going well. On June 21 and 22, 1920, a village conference was called to consider church matters. Three hundred and fifty people attended. Representatives of various denominations in which interest was shown were invited to present the beliefs and programs of their respective churches. Bishop Rowe was invited to speak for the Episcopalians and Edward Marsden for the Presbyterians. During the conference, and before any action was taken, it was agreed that a committee should be

appointed to canvass the Metlakatla community for the people's vote as to whether they wanted to have a Presbyterian church or to remain in the Duncan church. If either side had a majority of one vote the losing side would join the winning side to make the vote unanimous. The vote was taken on June 25th and 26th. When the trustees of the Duncan Estate received word of this action they warned that anyone voting to leave the Christian Mission would cut himself off from the Duncan Estate, valued at $150,000. This caused a few people to withdraw their names from the Presbyterian list but the report of the committee listed 177 names for a Presbyterian church and 164 for the Christian Mission. (The original list is still in existence.) A petition signed by 183 names was sent to the Presbytery of Alaska asking for the organization of a Presbyterian church in Metlakatla. The church meant more to these people than their interest in the Estate.

The Organization of the Church

THE PETITION was presented to the presbytery. No action was taken on it because the presbytery did not want to establish a competitive church. Instead, a committee headed by the Rev. David Waggoner of Juneau was appointed to visit Metlakatla and report its findings. The committee was convinced of the need and desire and recommended that the presbytery organize the church. The presbytery did not accept the report but met in Metlakatla and heard testimony for three days. At the end, the presbytery voted to organize the church. This was done on October 18, 1920, in the auditorium of the school.

The Church Building

A CHURCH had been organized but there was no building in which to meet. The Duncan trustees withdrew from the Presbyterians the use of the Duncan church. Sunday services were held in the United States school building, and week-day meetings in the homes. The people began to gather funds for a church building. An appeal was made to the Board of Home Missions for help. The

appeal was refused on the ground that one church was enough for a village of that size. Dr. S. Hall Young was sent to Metlakatla to investigate. He spent several days interviewing people and then recommended that help be granted. His recommendation was accepted and the church was built.

Growth

Since its organization, the church has grown steadily in numbers, spiritual power, influence, and financial strength. It was served for twelve years by the Rev. Edward Marsden, who gave a great ministry. For the last twelve years it has been served by the Rev. Alfred D. Swogger, who has continued the good work. In 1944 it reported 204 members. In October, 1945, the church will celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary. In preparation for this event the people have raised several thousand dollars to renovate the building inside and out and install a new organ. They have been paying all of their own expenses and a part of the salary of the minister. When they have finished with the renovation they will increase their portion of the support of their pastor. The church seeks to minister to the community in the name of Christ and to build strong Christians who will know and follow Christ wherever they are. Its struggle, record, and purpose speak for themselves.

Recent Decisions

The trustees of the Duncan Estate have repeatedly requested the Board of National Missions to discontinue the church and withdraw from the community on the grounds that two churches are not needed in a community of seven hundred people and that they have ample funds to care for the spiritual needs of the community.

The Board of National Missions has no power to dissolve a Presbyterian church, and the Presbytery of Alaska is opposed to such action. The Board does have power for just cause to withhold current funds from a church, and the denomination believes in comity with sister churches. The Secretary of the Unit of Work in Alaska was asked to visit Metlakatla, which he did in April, 1944.

The people told him the story which is written here and on twenty-four hour's notice handed him the following petition:

"Metlakatla, Alaska April 19, 1944
"To the Board of National Missions
Presbyterian Church of America
"We the undersigned members of the Presbyterian Church of Metlakatla, Alaska, respectfully appeal to your authority to ignore once and for all the suggestions and wishes of The Duncan Trustees, and Members of The Duncan Church, to unite the members of The Presbyterian Church with The Duncan Church as One, under the supervision of The Duncan Trustees, or any other denomination. As we have no desire ever to return, having pledged our faith to The Presbyterian Church, we wish to remain loyal and true to our promise."

This petition listed 178 names and it was clearly stated that parents had signed for their children who were away at school.

The Board of National Missions considered its support of the Metlakatla Church at its meeting on June 15, 1944. Acting upon the above information and upon the petition from the people, the Board felt "that it [Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.] should not grant the request of the Trustees of the Duncan Estate to withdraw its support at this time." It urged the congregation to seek a greater spirit of harmony and cooperation with the congregation of the Christian Mission and to assume a larger portion of its own support.

The Story in Brief

One of the leaders in the Presbyterian Church of Metlakatla summed up the story this way: "My wife sent down to the States for a young rose bush in a little pot. She cultivated it and it grew. She had to repot it. It outgrew the pot again and had to be planted in a larger one. Then it became too big to be kept inside the house and she planted it in the yard where it covers the side of the house and produces beautiful roses.

"We are eternally grateful to Father Duncan. He gave us the little rose bush. Now we have

grown beyond the pot or mold he gave us, and even as you cannot take that rose bush out of the yard and put it back into the original little pot, no more can you take this congregation of Presbyterians and put us back into the Christian Mission which Father Duncan gave us." Father Duncan planted the seed and it has outgrown his own vision.

This information has been gathered from statements from many sources. The elders of the church wanted to add many more details. If anyone is interested in seeking further information he may consult the following who were close to all the developments.

The Session and People
of the Metlakatla Presbyterian Church

The Rev. Alfred D. Swogger
Pastor of the Metlakatla Presbyterian Church

The Rev. David Waggoner, D.D.
2100 East Sunset Drive, Bellingham, Washington
Retired missionary-pastor in Alaska

The Rev. James H. Condit, D.D.
2889 San Pasqual St., Pasadena 8, California
Retired Superintendent of Presbyterian Missions

Mr. W. G. Beattie
1840 Onyx Street, Eugene, Oregon
Organizer of the Government School

The letters of The Rev. Edward Marsden, Hon. Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior, and The Rev. S. Hall Young, D.D., pioneer missionary in Alaska.

J. Earl Jackman, *Secretary*
Unit of Work in Alaska

Board of National Missions
of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.
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Edward Marsden, one of the youths of the village, had been highly favored by Mr. Duncan as a boy, but he lost this favor when he determined to go to the States and get an education, and especially when he decided to study for the Presbyterian ministry. Mr. Marsden returned to Alaska and ministered for a time at Saxman and later moved to Metlakatla. He guided his people in the establishment of the Presbyterian church. He has been unjustly accused of many things, but even his enemies must admit that the product of his life is found in the advanced economic, civic, moral, and spiritual life of his people in all of Southeastern Alaska.

People were asking for baptism, communion, church membership, and affiliation with an American denomination. The program of the Christian Mission was under the supervision of the church elders and things were not going well. On June 21 and 22, 1920, a village conference was called to consider church matters. Three hundred and fifty people attended. Representatives of various denominations in which interest was shown were invited to present the beliefs and programs of their respective churches. Bishop Rowe was invited to speak for the Episcopalians

and Edward Marsden for the Presbyterians. During the conference, and before any action was taken, it was agreed that a committee should be appointed to canvass the Metlakatla community for the people's vote as to whether they wanted to have a Presbyterian church or to remain in the Duncan church. If either side had a majority of one vote, the losing side would join the winning side to make the vote unanimous. The vote was taken on June 25th and 26th. When the trustees of the Duncan Estate received word of this action they warned that anyone voting to leave the Christian Mission would cut himself off from the Duncan Estate, valued at $150,000. This caused a few people to withdraw their names from the Presbyterian list but the report of the committee listed 177 names for a Presbyterian church and 164 for the Christian Mission. (The original list is still in existence.) A petition signed by 183 names was sent to the Presbytery of Alaska asking for the organization of a Presbyterian church in Metlakatla. The church meant more to these people than their interest in the Estate.

The Organization of the Church

THE PETITION was presented to the presbytery. No action was taken on it because the presbytery did not want to establish a competitive church. Instead, a committee headed by the Rev. David Waggoner of Juneau was appointed to visit Metlakatla and report its findings. The committee was convinced of the need and desire and recommended that the presbytery organize the church. The presbytery did not accept the report but met in Metlakatla and heard testimony for three days. At the end, the presbytery voted to organize the church. This was done on October 18, 1920, in the auditorium of the school.

The Church Building

A CHURCH had been organized and there was no building in which to meet. The Duncan Trustees withdrew from the Presbyterians the use of the

Duncan Church and the Presbyterians realized they did not belong there anymore. Sunday services were held in the United States school building, and week-day meetings in the homes. The people began to gather funds for a church building. An appeal was made to the Board of Home Missions for help. The appeal was refused on the ground that one church was enough for a village of that size. Dr. S. Hall Young was sent to Metlakatla to investigate. He spent several days interviewing people and then recommended that help be granted. His recommendation was accepted and the church was built.

Growth

Since its organization, the church has grown steadily in numbers, spiritual power, influence, and financial strength. It was served for twelve years by the Rev. Edward Marsden who gave a great ministry. Since his death it has been served by the Rev. Alfred D. Swogger, who has continued the good work. In 1945 it reported 226 members. In October, 1945, the church celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. In preparation for this event the people raised several thousand dollars to renovate the building inside and out and install a new organ. The plans include a new furnace and an enlarged Sunday school wing. They have been paying all of their own expenses and a part of the salary of the minister. When they have finished with the renovation, they will increase their portion of the support of their pastor. The church seeks to minister to the community in the name of Christ and to build strong Christians, who will know and follow Christ wherever they are. Its struggle, record, and purpose speak for themselves.

Recent Decisions

The trustees of the Duncan Estate have repeatedly requested the Board of National Missions to discontinue the church and withdraw from the community on the grounds that two

churches are not needed in a community of seven hundred people and that they have ample funds to care for the spiritual needs of the community.

The Board of National Missions has no power to dissolve a Presbyterian church, and the Presbytery of Alaska is opposed to such action. The Board does have power for just cause to withhold current funds from a church, and the denomination believes in comity with sister churches. The Secretary of the Unit of Work in Alaska was asked to visit Metlakatla, which he did in April, 1944. The people told him the story which is written here and on twenty-four hours' notice handed him the following petition:

"Metlakatla, Alaska April 19, 1944

"To the Board of National Missions
Presbyterian Church of America

"We the undersigned members of the Presbyterian Church of Metlakatla, Alaska, respectfully appeal to your authority to ignore once and for all the suggestions and wishes of The Duncan Trustees and Members of The Duncan Church, to unite the members of The Presbyterian Church with The Duncan Church as One, under the supervision of The Duncan Trustees, or any other denomination. As we have no desire ever to return, having pledged our faith to The Presbyterian Church, we wish to remain loyal and true to our promise."

This petition listed 178 names and it was clearly stated that parents had signed for their children who were away at school.

The Board of National Missions considered its support of the Metlakatla Church at its meeting on June 15, 1944. Acting upon the above information and upon the petition from the people, the Board felt "that it [Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.] should not grant the request of the Trustees of the Duncan Estate to withdraw its support at this time." It urged the congregation to seek a greater spirit of harmony and cooperation with the congregation of the Christian Mission and to assume a larger portion of its own support.

The Story in Brief

One of the leaders in the Presbyterian Church of Metlakatla summed up the story this way: "My wife sent down to the States for a young rose bush in a little pot. She cultivated it and it grew. She had to repot it. It outgrew the pot again and had to be planted in a larger one. Then it became too big to be kept inside the house and she planted it in the yard where it covers the side of the house and produces beautiful roses.

"We are eternally grateful to Father Duncan. He gave us the little rose bush. Now we have grown beyond the pot or mold he gave us, and even as you cannot take that rose bush out of the yard and put it back into the original little pot, no more can you take this congregation of Presbyterians and put us back into the Christian Mission which Father Duncan gave us." Father Duncan planted the seed and it has outgrown his own vision.

This information has been gathered from statements from many sources. The elders of the church wanted to add many more details. If anyone is interested in seeking further information, he may consult the following who were close to all the developments.

The Session and People
of the Metlakatla Presbyterian Church

The Rev. Alfred D. Swogger
Pastor of the Metlakatla Presbyterian Church

The Rev. David Waggoner, D.D.
Nelscott, Oregon
Retired missionary-pastor in Alaska

The Rev. James H. Condit, D.D.
2889 San Pasqual St., Pasadena 8, California
Retired Superintendent of Presbyterian Missions

Mr. W. G. Beattie
1840 Onyx Street, Eugene, Oregon
Organizer of the Government School

The letters of the Rev. Edward Marsden, Hon. Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior, and the Rev. S. Hall Young, D.D., pioneer missionary in Alaska.

J. Earl Jackman, *Secretary*
Unit of Work in Alaska

Board of National Missions
of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.
156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

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